

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 9987

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINT KS US
SUBJ: KOREAN SCANDAL STORY

1. WE HAVE BEEN GETTING WHAT WE JUDGE TO BE FAIRLY CREDIBLE INDICATIONS THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY SHORTLY GO PUBLIC WITH THE WASHINGTON SCANDAL STORY. OUR SOURCES TO DATE ARE WELL-PLACED AND KNOWLEDGEABLE JOURNALISTS. ALL ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO JUST HOW THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO THIS. SOME SPECULATION HOLDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL RELEASE THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATION ON THE SUBJECT WHICH HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. ANOTHER SPECULATION IS THAT THE TRANSCRIPT OR REPORT OR SOME ACCOUNT OF RECENT MEETINGS INVOLVING THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF THE ASSEMBLY, THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER WILL BE THE VEHICLE. ALL SOURCES INDICATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT MAY MAKE ITS MOVE BEFORE DECEMBER 20 WHICH IS THE ASSEMBLY'S PRESENTLY PLANNED DATE OF ADJOURNMENT. ONE SOURCE FEELS THE STORY WILL BREAK THIS WEEKEND.

2. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT WHATEVER METHOD OF GOING PUBLIC IS CHOSEN BY THE GOVERNMENT, THE BLAME FOR THE SCANDALS AND THE SUBSEQUENT STRAIN ON US/ROK RELATIONS WILL TO SOME MEASURE BE PLACED ON THE US, PROBABLY FOR THE MOST PART ON THE US PRESS, BUT WITH AT LEAST AN INFERENCE OF USG COMPLICITY. IT ALSO
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SEEMS LIKELY THAT ANY KOREAN COMPLICITY WILL, IF ADMITTED AT ALL, BE DOWNPLAYED.

3. IN THE BELIEF THAT A PROMPT OFFICIAL AND LOCAL REACTION TO SUCH A GOVERNMENT MOVE WOULD NOT ONLY BE ADVISABLE BUT NECESSARY WE ARE DRAFTING CONTINGENCY NEWS RELEASE WHICH WILL RELY FOR ITS

CONTENT ON STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE PUBLICLY BY THE
DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN OR PREPARED FOR HIS USE IF ASKED, WOULD
APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER GUIDANCE.
SNEIDER

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